DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination under 37 CFR 1.114

1.   A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in

37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is

eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e)

has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to

37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 02/02/2009 has been entered. Applicant's

amendment received on 03/06/2009 has been entered into record. Claims 1, 21, 24, 35 and 48 are

amended. Claims 11, 36 and 49 are cancelled. Claims 1-10, 12-35, 37-48 and 50-57 are currently

pending

2.   Amendment received on 08/08/2008 was entered into record. No claim was amended.

3.   Applicant's submission filed on 01/22/2008 was entered. Claims 1, 21, 30, 35 and 48

were amended.

4.   Amendment received on 08/03/2007 was entered. Claim 21 was amended.

5.   Applicant's submission filed on 10/20/2006 was entered. The Specification change was

examined and accepted. Amendment received on 01/08/2007 was entered into record. Claims 1,

21, 35 and 48 were amended. Claims 58-100 were withdrawn.

6.   Amendment received on 04/10/2006 was entered into record. Claims 1, 14, 21, 41, 96

and 99 were amended.

7.   Pre-exam amendment received on 08/26/2002 was entered. Claims 2-100 were new. The

amended specification changes were reviewed and accepted. The amended proposed drawing

changes were reviewed and accepted.

Priority

8.   This application claims the benefit of 60/245,138 on 11/01/2000. The filing date is

10/31/2001.

Examiner's Amendment

9.   An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or

additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR

1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the

payment of the issue fee.

10.   Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with

John P. Wagner (reg. no. 35,398) on 08/04/2009.

11.   The application has been amended against applicant submitted claim set dated

03/06/2009 as follows (only examiner amended claims are shown):

IN THE CLAIMS

1. A method for enhancing communication within a community, the method comprising:
        (a) establishing a hierarchical structure for organizing communications between a
plurality of users within the community;
        (b) distributing control through selection of inherited parameters of said hierarchical
structure to at least one of said plurality of users, wherein said inherited parameters comprise
access parameters defining access by said plurality of users to said communications organized
within said hierarchical structure and wherein said access parameters are selected from the group
consisting of an inclusive access in which access to each of said stored communications in said
hierarchical structure is allowed except where excluded by said inherited parameters and an
exclusive access in which access to each of said stored communications in said hierarchical
structure is allowed only where explicitly assigned;
        (c) storing in said hierarchical structure at least a portion of said communications
received from said plurality of users from at least one of a plurality of input devices in relation to
at least one of a plurality of topics that is user selected;
        ([[z]]d) providing a link to a resource associated with said at least a portion of said
communications that is stored, wherein said link is available for access by authorized users of
said plurality of users;

([[d]]e) prioritizing said at least a portion of said communications within said hierarchical structure, wherein an initial thread of said plurality of communications is assigned a higher priority than a response to a thread of said plurality of communications;

([[e]]f) presenting to at least a one of said plurality of users through said at least one of a plurality of input devices a selected portion of said communications stored in said hierarchical structure, wherein said selected portion of said communications are related under said at least one of a plurality of topics that is user selected;

([[f]]g) enabling dynamic interaction through further contributions of communications by said at least a one of said plurality of users through said at least one of a plurality of input devices in response to presentation of said selected portion of said communications within said hierarchical structure, wherein said further contributions of communications are stored and accessed within said hierarchical structure in relation to said topic, wherein said further contributions are associated with at least one discussion thread comprising a recorded communication under said at least one of a plurality of topics that is conducted between participating users of said plurality of users.; and

([[g]]h) presenting to at least a one of said plurality of users at least a portion of said plurality of communications based on said prioritization.

58-100 (Cancelled)

Reasons for Allowance

12.   Claims 1-10, 12-35, 37-48 and 50-57 are allowed as amended above.

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

The closest prior arts of record issued to Sedlar (US 6549916 B1), Gainey et al. (US

6941304 B2), Dennis et al. (US 6466932 B1), Gilchrist et al. (US 6081832 A) and Underwood

(US 6718535 B1) together fail to teach or suggest "a method for enhancing communication

within a community, the method comprising: (a) establishing a hierarchical structure for

organizing communications between a plurality of users within the community; (b) distributing

control through selection of inherited parameters of said hierarchical structure to at least one of

said plurality of users, wherein said inherited parameters comprise access parameters defining

access by said plurality of users to said communications organized within said hierarchical

structure and wherein said access parameters are selected from the group consisting of an

inclusive access in which access to each of said stored communications in said hierarchical

structure is allowed except where excluded by said inherited parameters and an exclusive access

in which access to each of said stored communications in said hierarchical structure is allowed

only where explicitly assigned; (c) storing in said hierarchical structure at least a portion of said

communications received from said plurality of users from at least one a plurality of input

devices in relation to at least one of a plurality of topics that is user selected; (z) providing a link

to a resource associated with said at least a portion of said communications that is stored,

wherein said link is available for access by authorized users of said plurality of users; (d)

prioritizing said at least a portion of said communications within said hierarchical structure,

wherein an initial thread of said plurality of communications is assigned a higher priority than a

response to a thread of said plurality of communications; (e) presenting to at least a one of said

plurality of users through said at least one of plurality of input devices a selected portion of said

communications stored in said hierarchical structure, wherein said selected portion of said

communications are related under said at least one of a plurality of topics that is user selected; (f)

enabling dynamic interaction through further contributions of communications by said at least a

one of said plurality of users through said at least one of a plurality of input devices in response

to presentation of said selected portion of said communications within said hierarchical structure,

wherein said further contributions of communications are stored and accessed within said

hierarchical structure in relation to said topic, where said further contributions are associated

with at least one discussion thread comprising a recorded communication under said at least one

of a plurality of topics that is conducted between participating users of said plurality of users;

and (g) presenting to at least a one of said plurality of users at least a portion of said plurality of

communications based on said prioritization" in combination with all the elements of each

independent claim as presented by Applicant [See page 2 through page 16 of applicant's

amendment received 03/06/2009]. Applicant argues that the prior arts do not disclose or suggest

the limitation combination as per independent claims and particularly the limitations of

"distributing control through selection of inherited parameters of said hierarchical structure to at

least one of said plurality of users, wherein said inherited parameters comprise access parameters

defining access by said plurality of users to said communications organized within said

hierarchical structure and wherein said access parameters are selected from the group consisting

of an inclusive access in which access to each of said stored communications in said hierarchical

structure is allowed except where excluded by said inherited parameters and an exclusive access

in which access to each of said stored communications in said hierarchical structure is allowed

only where explicitly assigned" and "prioritizing said at least a portion of said communications

within said hierarchical structure, wherein an initial thread of said plurality of communications is

assigned a higher priority than a response to a thread of said plurality of communications". This

argument is considered persuasive as per 3rd paragraph on page 29 through 2nd paragraphs on

page 32 of applicant's amendment received 03/06/2009.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the

payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue

fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for

Allowance."

Conclusion

13.   Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the

examiner should be directed to Peling A. Shaw whose telephone number is (571) 272-7968. The

examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8:00 - 4:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's

supervisor, William C. Vaughn can be reached on (571) 272-3922. The fax phone number for

the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (571) 273-8300.

Information regarding the statu9s of an application may be obtained from the Patent

Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications

may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished

applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR

system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR

system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

/P. A. S./
Examiner, Art Unit 2444
/William C. Vaughn, Jr./
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 2444